

Claims

1. A device for operating at least one first and one second discharge lamp (71, 72) having

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a coupling-out device (30) for coupling out a heating current for the incandescent filaments (711, 712, 721, 722) of the discharge lamps (71, 72) from a supply branch of the device, the coupling-out device (30) having a current control device (PTC) for controlling the heating current, and a heating transformer unit (L_{hp} , L_{hs1} , L_{hs2} , L_{hs3}), and having

15 a first contact device connected to the supply branch, and a second contact device for making contact with the first and second discharge lamp (71, 72), a secondary coil unit (L_{hs1} , L_{hs2} , L_{hs3}) of the heating transformer unit being connected to the first and second contact device for the purpose of supplying the incandescent 20 filaments with heating current.

2. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which the secondary coil unit (L_{hs1} , L_{hs2} , L_{hs3}) comprises three coils, specifically a first secondary coil (L_{hs1}) for supplying a first incandescent filament (711) of the first discharge lamp (71), a second secondary coil (L_{hs2}) for supplying a second incandescent filament (712) of the first discharge lamp (71) and a first incandescent filament (721) of the second discharge lamp (72), and a third secondary coil (L_{hs3}) for supplying a second incandescent filament (722) of the second discharge lamp (72).

35 3. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which the supply branch comprises a resonance capacitor (C_{res}) and a resonance inductor (L_{res}).

4. The device as claimed in claim 3, in which the resonance inductor (L_{res}) constitutes the primary coil of a coupling-out transformer unit whose secondary coil (L_a) drives the coupling-out device.

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5. The device as claimed in claim 3, in which the resonance inductor is bipartite, and a portion (L_{res2}) thereof constitutes the primary coil of a coupling-out transformer unit for driving the coupling-out device.

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6. The device as claimed in claim 3, in which the resonance inductor (L_{res}) has a tap via which the coupling-out device can be driven.

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7. The device as claimed in claim 1, in which a sequential starting capacitor (C_{seq}) is connected in parallel with the first or second contact device.

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8. The device as claimed in one of claims 1, in which the current control device (PTC) comprises a PTC thermistor.

9. An electronic ballast for operating discharge lamps (71, 72), having a device as claimed in claim 1.

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10. A method for operating at least two discharge lamps (71, 72) that are supplied with power via a supply branch, characterized in that the entire power for preheating incandescent filaments (711, 712, 721, 30 722) of the discharge lamps (71, 72) is coupled out inductively from the supply branch.